

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OLC 73-1285

6 November 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Stuart Symington
Acting Chairman, Senate Armed
Services Committee

SUBJECT: Memorandum for Deputy Director Walters
from Director Richard Helms, Dated
28 June 1972, Watergate Affair

Recent speculation in the press and elsewhere contends that Mr. Helms' 28 June 1972 memorandum is in conflict with his testimony before congressional committees and Federal prosecutors on the Watergate affair. This speculation centers around the second paragraph of that memorandum which states in part:

"We still adhere to the request that they [the FBI] confine themselves to the personalities already arrested or directly under suspicion and that they desist from expanding this investigation into other areas which may well, eventually, run afoul of our operations."

The circumstances surrounding the memorandum and the actions of Mr. Helms, both before and after it was written, establish a consistent record of cooperation with FBI investigations. In this connection it will be recalled that:

- a. On 22 June 1972 in response to Mr. Gray's concern that he may be poking into a CIA operation, Mr. Helms told Mr. Gray that there was no CIA involvement in Watergate.
- b. On 27 June 1972 in response to the FBI's earlier request, Mr. Helms advised Mr. Gray that the FBI's investigation of Mr. Ogarrio would not compromise any Agency activities.

c. On 28 June 1972 Mr. Helms informed Mr. Gray that the Agency had no interest in Mr. Dahlberg. The FBI was thus under no constraint against investigating him.

d. On 6 July 1972 in a meeting with Mr. Gray, General Walters said that he had no basis to tell him to cease further investigations on the grounds that it would compromise the security interests of the United States.

e. Throughout the course of the FBI's investigation of the Watergate incident, the Agency responded to numerous requests for information from the FBI. (Copies of the documentation provided to the FBI are on file with CIA's four congressional oversight subcommittees, the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, and the Office of the Special Prosecutor.)

None of the information provided to the FBI by the Agency indicated CIA involvement in the Watergate incident nor did it indicate that investigation by the FBI would compromise CIA activities.

On 28 June 1972, Mr. Gray cancelled a meeting he had scheduled with Mr. Helms for that day. Mr. Helms, who was about to depart on a trip overseas, thought it likely that this meeting might be rescheduled during his absence with his new Deputy, General Walters. On the same day he wrote a memorandum to General Walters giving guidance for such a meeting. He wanted General Walters to cooperate with the FBI so that its investigation of the Watergate break-in could go forward, but he wanted to discourage a fishing expedition into CIA operations. Mr. Helms was concerned about leakage in the FBI which could compromise sensitive Agency operations. In this connection, it will be recalled that:

a. There had been queries from the FBI about Messrs. Ogarrio and Dahlberg without any explanation from the FBI as to what these individuals represented.

b. Despite Mr. Helms' repeated denials, Mr. Gray persisted in querying the Agency about possible CIA involvement in the Watergate incident.

c. On 22 June 1972, in checking with the FBI on the progress of its investigation of Mr. McCord, the Agency was advised that word had come down from Mr. Gray that there was not to be any dissemination of any information about the case in oral or written form.

In light of these developments, and particularly because of the additional fact that there had been recent leaks of sensitive information provided by CIA to the FBI, Mr. Helms felt it necessary to give specific guidance for Agency officials acting during his forthcoming absence to discourage FBI investigation into Agency operations unless specific reason or justification therefor was offered.

On 28 June Acting Director Gray agreed to call off interviews with Agency officers [redacted]. The FBI's interest in talking to these officers arose from the fact that their names had been found in a notebook belonging to Howard Hunt. The interviews had been scheduled by the field office of the FBI which had been conducting the initial interviews relating to the Watergate incident. It had been from this office that the above-mentioned leaks had apparently originated. For this reason, the Agency did not want Messrs. [redacted] interviewed by this office, but it was always understood that anyone from Mr. Gray's own office would have access to them if their testimony was needed. Mr. [redacted] had been executive assistant to General Cushman and later General Walters, and in that capacity has submitted an affidavit which was given to the Agency's four oversight committees, the Select Committee and the Special Prosecutor, detailing his contacts with Howard Hunt. Mr. Hunt's contact with Mr. [redacted] arose from Hunt's interest in an incident regarding France with which [redacted] happened to be familiar. As events transpired, however, the instruction from Mr. Gray to cancel the interviews was not received by the field office until after [redacted] had been interviewed.

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The essential facts set forth above have been publicly and thoroughly substantiated in testimony and memoranda before congressional committees investigating the Watergate incident. Finally, as you may recall most of the essentials of the above were covered in my confirmation hearings, the record of which has since been made public.


W.E. Colby
Director

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